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Manipulation of Meanings

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During the last few years, the words "Hindu" and "Hinduism" have been in the news as never before. All sorts of scholars, scribes, and politicians who subscribe to what passes for Secularism in this country, have been after these two words with hammer and tongs. The words have been made to mean whatever happens to sound dirty or despicable to Secularist ears.* A brand new phrase, "Hindu fundamentalism", has been coined and floated with great fanfare without anyone of its happy hawkers caring to consult the commonest dictionary of the English language and finding out whether the word "fundamentalism" can at all be tacked to the word "Hindu". The tribe of slogan-shouters has simply forged ahead, and equated "Hindu fundamentalism" with Nazism and Fascism. Thus, it has become a free for all in which any word or phrase can mean anything and everything. Swearology has scored over sanity, and lung-power over logic.

One may wonder as to why Hindus and Hinduism are being portrayed in this puerile and perverted manner by the stalwarts of Secularism in this country. The puzzle gets solved when one contemplates the character of Indian Secularism, and finds that it is no more than a smokescreen used by the Muslim–Christian-Communist combine in order to keep India's national society and culture at bay. And one has to study the doctrines of Islam, Christianity, and Communism if one wants to understand as to why the adherents of these ideologies present Hindus and Hinduism the way they do. They are simply projecting their self-images on to those whom they view as their enemies. It is difficult for Muslims, Christians, and Communists to believe that Hindus and Hinduism will not do to them what they have done or plan to do to Hindus and Hinduism. It is not unoften that civilized people become a nightmare for criminals, and lunatics get scared by those who are sane.

A more mischievous exercise has been going on for quite some time in the same Secularist circles. They have been not only setting the Buddhists and the Jains apart from the Hindus, but also asserting that Hinduism has always been at war with Buddhism and Jainism. While Hinduism has been increasingly identified with caste discrimination, social oppression, and brahmanical priestcraft, Buddhism and Jainism

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* We are not taking into account the recent Secularist exercise in quoting selectively from Hindu leaders and thinkers in order to pit a "tolerant Hinduism" against an "intolerant *Hindutva*". The exercise is too puerile to deserve comment.

have been presented as humanitarian and rationalsit revolts against it and in favour of equality and social justice.

We, therefore, think it worthwhile to review the history of the words "Hindu" and "Hinduism", and determine what these words have meant, at what time, and to whom. This enquiry will also reveal the reason or the psychological process which has led our Hindus by accident of birth to place themselves squarely on the side of Muslim *mujāhids*, Christian crusaders, and Communist revolutionaries in exhibiting downright contempt for the people and the culture of this country.

A study of literary and epigraphic sources shows that the word "Hindu" has appeared in our indigenous languages or popular parlance in a comparatively recent period, keeping in view the long span of our recorded history. We do not find this word in any indigenous language prior to the advent of Islamic invaders from the seventh century onwards. Even after the invaders established their rule in several parts of the country, this word was used rather sparsely in the local literature. Monier-Williams who compiled his famous dictionary from a large range of Sanskrit literature, could not find any indigenous root for this word. He says explicitly that the word is derived "from the Persian Hindū". Dictionaries of all indigenous languages say the same. So also the dictionaries of European languages.

The word "Hinduism" has been added to our vocabulary at a still more recent stage. It was originally contributed by the modern discipline of Indology, and gained wide currency in this country simply because the leaders of our national reawakening in the second half of the nineteenth century espoused it as expressive of our national identity as well as our spiritual and cultural greatness. These leaders, down to Mahatma Gandhi, never conceded that Hinduism did not include Buddhism, or Jainism, or Sikhism, or any other way of worship that had its roots in India.

Of course, some Nationalists have tried to trace the word "Hindu" to *saptasindhu* which is mentioned in the Rigveda on several occasions. They want the word to have an indigenous as well as an ancient ring. The intention is understandable. But the excercise has remained forced, if nor far-fetched. Firstly, it does not notice that the expression used in the Rigveda is not *saptasindhu* but *saptasaindhvah*. Secondly, it does not make it quite clear whether the expression stands for a country, or for a people, or simply for seven rivers in the Punjab; the expression seems to mean different things in different contexts. Thirdly, it does not explain why the change from "Sindhu" to "Hindu" took such a long time to surface in our indigenous languages. Lastly, and more singnifi-

cantly, it has not taken into account the fact that our countrymen were never known as Hindus in Southeast Asia in the pre-Islamic period, although they had a large presence there since centuries before the birth of Christ.

Going back to the pre-Islamic period in our own country, we find that our ancestors shared in common a name for their homeland. That was *Bhāratavarśa*, which comprised at that time the present-day Seistan province of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. They also shared in common a name for the spiritual-cultural complex to which they subscribed. That was *Sanātana Dharma*, which covered Brahmanism, Buddhism, Jainism, and also what are now known as tribal religions. But there is no evidence, literary or epigraphic, that they shared in common a name for themselves as a people. Some Purāṇas say that Bhāratavarśa is the land of the *bhāratī santatih*. The expression, however, is found nowhere else in the vast literature which has come to us from those times. In any case, this much is quite certain that our ancestors in those times did not use the word "Hindu" for describing themselves collectively. Hiuen Tsang who visited this country between AD 630 and 645 says that while the word "Shin-tu" (Chinese for "Hindu") could be heard outside our borders, it was unknown within the country.

Nor do we have a record of how our people identified themselves when they travelled abroad. It is not at all in doubt that they travelled a lot, and all the time. They were frequent visitors to far-off places in all directions, by land as well as by sea. They went out individually as well as in groups. They adventured as sailors, as merchants, as princes, as monks, as priests, as scholars, as craftsmen, and in several other capacities. They had established many flourishing settlements in Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Central and South America towards the east, and in Iran, West Asia, East and North Africa, and Europe towards the west. Central Asia, China, Korea, and Japan were as familiar to them as their own homeland. But the literature which describes their voyages, or the epigraphs which testify to their presence abroad, do not yield any generic or national name by which they were known or made themselves known to the people in foreign countries.

There is, therefore, no running away from the fact that the word "Hindu" occurs for the first time in the Avesta of the ancient Iranians who used this word for designating this country as well as as its people. They did not have to coin this word out of thin air. It was simply their way of pronouncing the word "Sindhu", the name of the mighty river which has always been a major landmark for travellers to this country

from lands towards the north-west. To start with, the word seems to have been used for provinces and the people in the vicinity of the Sindhu. But, in due course, it was extended to cover all parts of this country and all its people. The word also spread to countries to the north and west of Iran. The ancient Greeks were quite familiar with the words "Indus" and "Indoi" — their way of pronouncing "Sindhu" and "Sindhīs". The ancient Arabs, Turks (Śakas, Kuṣāṇas, etc.), Mongolians (Hūṇas, Kirātas, etc.), and the Chinese were also familiar with the word, sometimes in their own variations on it such as "Shin-tu". It may thus be said that the word "Hindu" had acquired a national connotation since the days of the Avesta, although in the eyes of only the foreigners. At the same time, it may be noted that the word was oblivious of all distinctions in terms of class, or caste, or religion among the "Hindus" in ancient times.

There is also evidence that at some stage in their history the ancient Iranians started using the word "Hindu" in more than a purely descriptive sense. The word seems to have acquired for them a derogatory meaning as well. Scholars are not quite certain, nor in complete agreement, about the nature of differences that developed between the Vedics of this country on the one hand and the Avestans of Iran on the other. The two people had had much in common, and for a long time, in the realm of language, religion, rituals, and ethical norms. It is surmised that the rift appeared with the rise of Zarathustra (Zoroaster) as a religious reformer in the region round Bāhlīka (Balkh), and became bitter by the time the Achaeminid dynasty rose to power in Iran. Zorastrianism became the state religion of Iran, and the Iranians started looking down upon the Hindus as worshippers of "*dev*" (Skt. *deva*), their word for demon. They were using the word "*Ahura*" (Skt. *Asura*) for their own Deity.

The Iranians are known to have become more hostile to the Hindus as Buddhism spread in Khurasan and Central Asia, and the temples dedicated to *dev* were overshadowed by those dedicated to "*budd*" or "*but*" — their name for the Buddha. By the time the Islamized Arabs appeared on the scene, the "black-faced Hindu" had become known to the Iranians as the *but-prast* (worshipper of *budd* or *but*) par excellence. In fact, the word "Hindu" had become synonymous with the word "*but-prast*" in the Persian language which had developed out of ancient Pehlevi. Every Hindu place of worship was now being described as well despised as a *but-khāna*, house of *but* or *budd*. There were several other pejoratives which went with the word "Hindu" in Persian parlance. They have lived in Persian lexicons down to our own times.

What is relevent in the present context is that the word "Hindu" had acquired a religious connotation also prior to the Islamic invasions, although in the language of only the Iranians. It may be noted again that the Iranians show no knowledge of the fact that the worshippers of *dev* and *but* subscribed to many ways of worship. For the Persians, all Hindus were *but-prast*.

II

Of course, the Arab soldiers of Allāh and his Prophet did not have to depend on the Iranians for defining the Hindu as an idolater. They had known the Hindu as such for a long time. And they had their own patent word, "*mushrik*", which the Qur'ān had applied to the idolaters of Arabia, and which they continued to use in serious works on history and theology. But as the Islamized Arabs and Turks came to borrow heavily from Persian language and culture, they picked up the word "*but-prast*" and started using it more and more frequently for the hated Hindu. In due course, this word came to predominate in the Islamic parlance vis-a-vis the people of this country. And what must have sounded painfully surprising as well as supremely profane to Iranian ears, the Muslims started using the word "*ātish-prast* (fire-worshipper)" also for the worshippers of the *dev* and the *but*. Thus, in the lexicons of Islam, the Hindu stood defined and despised as the "crow-faced *kāfir*, the "wicked *mushrik*", the "blind *but-prast*", and the "accursed *ātish-prast*".

The story of how the armies of Islam advanced in different stages in different parts of the country, and what they did to the Hindus and their places of worship, has been documented in detail by many medieval Muslim chroniclers. They tell us that the soldiers of Allāh were rather fast in reaching for their swords and spears whenever and wherever they heard the word "*budd*" or "*but*". Buddhist temples, monasteries, and monks were always their prime targets, as is witnessed by the Buddhist ruins or Muslim monuments built with Buddhist temple materials, all along the trail of Islamic invasions. The pertinent point in the present context, however, is that nowhere in the voluminous Muslim chronicles do we find the natives of this country known by a name other than Hindu. There were some Jews, and Christians, and Zoroastrians settled here and there, particularly along the West Coast. More people belonging to these communities continued to come from time to time throughout the period covered by the Muslim chronicles. We find that people belonging to these communities are always identified as such — *ahl-i-Yahūd* or *Banū Isrāil*, *ahl-i-Naṣāra* or *Isāi*, and *ahl-i-*

Majūs or *Ātish-prast*. The chronicles distinguish these communities from the Muslims on the one hand, and from the natives of this country on the other. It is only when they come to the natives that no more distinctions are noticed; all natives are identified as *ahl-i-Hunūd* — Hindus.

We know from native records that at the time the Islamic invaders appeared on the scene, the people of this country subscribed to numerous ways of worship. They knew and made themselves known as belonging to this or that religious sect or sub-sect. But the Muslim chronicles notice no Buddhists, no Jains, no Śaivas, no Śāktas, no Vaiṣṇavas, nor members of any other sect or sub-sect — neither at the beginning of Islamic conquests, nor during the period of Muslim rule, nor yet when Muslim domination draws towards its end. In all their narratives, all natives are attacked as Hindus, massacred as Hindus, plundered as Hindus, converted forcibly as Hindus, captured and sold in slave markets as Hindus, and subjected to all sorts of malice and molestation as Hindus. The description of social and religious denominations of Hindu provided by Alberuni had no meaning for the subsequent Muslim swordsmen or historians. Abul Fazl's repetition of Alberuni was no more than mechanical. Mughal kings or Muslim nobles never attached any significance to it in dealing with the natives or their culture.

The Muslims never came to know, nor cared to know, as to which temple housed what idol. For them, all temples were Hindu *but-khānas* to be desecrated or destroyed as such. They never bothered to distinguish the idol of one God or Goddess from that of another. All idols were broken or burnt by them as so many *buts*. They were deposited in the royal treasury if made of precious metals, and strewn at the doorsteps of the mosques if fashiond from inferior stuff. In like manner, all priests and monks, no matter to what school or order they belonged , were for the Muslims so many "wicked Brahmans" to be slaughtered or molested as such. In short, the word "Hindu" had acquired a religious connotation for the first time within the borders of this country. The credit for this turn-out goes to the Muslim conquerors. With the coming of Islam to this country all schools and sects of Sanātana Dharma had a common denominator — Hindu.

We also know that at the time of Islamic invasions, the natives of this country stood organised in an hierarchy of many classes, castes, and sub-castes. But the invaders noticed no Kṣatriyas, no Vaiśyas, no Śūdras, nor any other class or caste distinctions. The only people they singled out for special attention were the "Brahmans". But it was not because they knew or recognized the Brāhmaṇas as a distinct caste; it

was simply because the "Brahmans" were the "mine of *kufr* (infidelism)" and "*shirk* (idolatry)", the "misleaders of mankind", the "greatest enemies of Allāh and his Prophet", and the "magicians who ensured that Hindus shall burn for ever in the blazing fire of hell". Nor did the Muslims distinguish between high-caste and low-caste *kāfirs* while killing them, or converting them by force, or plundering their properties, or capturing them as well as their women and children for enslavement, or reducing them to the status of *zimmīs* for imposing harsh disablities and discriminatory taxes on them. In Muslim eyes, all natives constituted an undifferentiated society, a solid mass, in which no constituent was distinct from another. Once again, it goes to the credit of the Muslim conquerors that the word "Hindu" acquired a national connonation within the borders of this country. The only natives who stood out of the ken were those who converted to Islam, willingly or unwillingly.

The next thing that happened during the period of Muslim conquest and rule, was far more significant and fraught with far-reaching consequences. This author is not in a position to determine more precisely the period during which the natives of this country espoused the word "Hindu" for themselves, and invested it with immense pride. All he can say at present is that by the time the Islamic sword swept over the South, and the Vijayanagara Empire took shape, the word "Hindu" was no more a hated word for the natives as it was for the foreign invaders.

A Kanarese inscription discovered in the Fort of Penugonda (now in Andhra Pradesh) and dated Śaka saṁvat 1276 (AD 1354) describes Bukkā I of Vijayanagara as *hindurāya-suratrāṇa purva-paśchima-samudrādhipati*, that is, the Sultān among the Hindu kings, and lord of the eastern and western seas.[1] Next, we have the Satyamangalam (North Arcot District, Tamil Nadu) Copper Plate inscription of Devarāya II dated Śaka saṁvat 1346 (AD 1424) in which verse 8 says that "Through the wind (*which was produced*) by the flapping of the ears of the elephants on the field of battle, the Tulushka (ie Musalman) horsemen experienced the fate of cotton (ie were blown away". Then follows the verse which applauds the king as *hindurāya-suratraṇa-vandivargeṇa vanditah*, that is, "the Sultān among the Hindu kings as eulogised by the bards".[2] Two more inscriptions of Devarāya, dated AD 1427 and

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[1]*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VI (1900–01), p. 327, footnote 2. A pun on the Muslim word "sultān" can also be detected. The word has been Sanskritized to "suratrāṇa" which can be made to mean "defender of the Gods" as well as "defended by the Gods".

[2]Ibid., Vol. III (1894–95), p. 40.

1428, award him the same honorific.[3] The fact that the bards were using the word "Hindu" as a word of praise, leaves little doubt that the word was pulsating with great pride. A Jain inscription found at Sadri in Jodhpur District of Rajasthan, and dated Vikrama saṁvat 1496 (AD 1441) is still more specific. It says that Mahārāṇā Kumbhakarṇa of Mewar "received the title *Hiṁdu-suratrāṇa* by defeating the (Muslim) Sultāns of Dhillī and Gūrjaratrā".[4]

Some more inscriptions are worth citing in this context. They are being taken up in a chronological order. The Somalpuram Grant of the Vijayanagara king Virūpākṣa is dated Śaka saṁvat 1389 (AD 1467). It describes the king ("in the glowing fire of whose valour, the Turushkas were scorched up") as "elevated by the titles such as *hindurāya-suratrāṇa*".[5] In the Hempe inscription of Krishṇadevarāya, dated Śaka saṁvat 1430 (AD 1508), the *hindurāya-suratrāṇa* is described as "the destroyer of rogue tigers."[6] The hint is more than clear: rogue tigers are the Muslim invaders. The same description of him is found in his Udayambakam Grant dated Śaka saṁvat 1450 (AD 1528),[7] two years before he died. In an inscription found at the holy city of Gaya in Bihar, the Vijayanagara king Acyutadevarāya is eulogised as "*hindurāya-suratrāṇa*, the firm establisher of the Hindu kingdom."[8] His Unamanjeri Plate issued in Śaka saṁvat 1462 (AD 1540) calls him not only *hindurāya-suratrāṇa* but also *induvaṁśa-śikhāmaṇi* (the jewel in the crown of the lunar dynasty).[9] The same applause is reserved for Sadāśivarāya in his Kanuma Grant dated Śaka saṁvat 1470 (AD 1548), and the British Museum Plates dated Śaka saṁvat 1478 (AD 1556).[10]

Thus, by the middle of the fourteenth century, the word "Hindu" had dropped the derogatory associations imposed on it by the Iranians and the Islamic invaders, and acquired a lot of lustre in the eyes of our own countrymen. Native heroes such as Mahārāṇā Kumbhakarṇa and Krishṇadevarāya, who defeated the Islamic onslaught, were hailed as Hindu heroes in subsequent centuries. Padmanābha uses the word "Hindu" for glorification of the Chauhāna heroes of Jalor in his epic poem, *Kānhaḍade-prabandha,* which he composed in AD 1455. It will not be long before Mahārāṇā Pratāpa Siṁha of Mewar becomes re-

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[3]Ibid., Vol. XIII (1915–16), p. 5, and Vol. XVII (1923–24), p. 111.
[4]Appendix Volume to Vols. XIX–XXIII, pp. 109–10.
[5]Ibid., Vol. XVII, p. 203.
[6]Ibid., Vol. I (1892), p. 365.
[7]Ibid., Vol. XIV (1917–18), p. 173.
[8]Ibid., Vol. XXXIII (1959–60), pp. 114–15.
[9]Ibid., Vol. III (1894–95), p. 148.
[10]Ibid., Vol. XIV (1917–18), p. 345, and Vol. IV (1896–97), p. 2.

nowned as *hindu-kula-kamala-divākara*, that is, the Sun which brings bloom to the lotus that is the Hindu nation. Chhatrapati Shivaji, who turned back the tide of Islamic invasion and inaugurated the war of liberation from Islamic imperialism, will be hailed all over Bhāratavarśā as the saviour of *Hindu Dharma* and the protector of its significant symbols — *gau-brāhmaṇa, śikhā-sūtra, devamūrti-devālaya*, and so on. So also Guru Gobind Singh, and Maharaja Chhatrasal.

And the word "Hindu" stood sanctified when Sanātana Dharma became known as Hindu Dharma. Numerous saint-poets arose in all parts of Bhāratavarśa who sang hymns in praise of Hindu Dharma, and who reminded their countrymen that they were inheritors of a great and vast spiritual vision. The "law" of Islam threatened death to those who said that a religion other than Islam could also be true. But that did not deter Sant Kabir and Guru Nanak from proclaiming that Hindu Dharma was as good as Islam. Guru Teg Bahadur defied the "law" of Islam at the very seat of its might, and offered his head (*sīsa-diyā*) in defence of Hindu Dharma (*tilak* and *janēu*).

III

Hindus survived the onslaught of Islamic imperialism, and came out of it with renewed pride in their spiritual and cultural heritage. But the wounds inflicted by Islam on Hindu religion, culture, society, polity, economy, and environment were pretty deep and needed time to heal. Hindus did not get that time because new forms of imperialism appeared on the scene in successive waves while Hindus were still battling with the residues of Islamic imperialism. Christian imperialism which had arrived in India at the beginning of the sixteenth century, received a new lease of life with the triumph of British arms by the end of the eighteenth. British imperialism which consolidated its hold over this country in the nineteenth century was only a variety of modern Westerm imperialism that was conquering many other parts of the world at the same time. Finally, Communist imperialism jumped into the fray in the wake of the Bolshevik *coup d'état* in Russia. Hindus had to face these imperialisms, one by one as well as in combination, before they gained independence from British rule in 1947. And residues of these imperialisms have continued to poison national life in the post-independence period.

The gravest injury which Hindus had suffered at the hands of Islamic imperialism was the destruction of their temples and monasteries, and the slaughter of Brāhmaṇas and Buddhist monks. Temples and monasteries were not mere places of worship and meditation; they were

seats of higher learning as well. Brāhmaṇas and Buddhist monks were not only priests and spiritual practitioners; they were also leaders of larger Hindu thought. Thus Hindus had been hit in the solar plexus. They were still capable of marshalling plenty of heroism (*kṣātra*), but their capacity for a broader vision (*brāhmaṇya*) had suffered a steep decline.

Even so, Islamic imperialism had failed to disarm the Hindus ideologically. Islam has been, and remains till today, not much more than a system of glorified terrorism in spite of all its tom-tom about Allāh and the Book from high heaven. The only way it has ever known, either for breaking resistance to its onward march or for imposing its own cock-and-bull stories on a conquered people, has been that of brute force. It has never learnt the art of legitimizing itself in the eyes of the conquered people by selling some high-sounding scholarship to them. In fact, its own stock of ideas has remained less than limited, and its scholarship has been sterile and hide-bound. Nor has it ever tried to understand how other societies and cultures function and flourish. Forcible conversions is the only method it has known for pulling the conquered people out of their moorings. Small wonder that it had, remained incapable of searching for the sources of Hindu inspiration, or acquiring any worthwhile knowledge of how Hindu society and culture had functioned down the ages. It could never earn even a semblance of legitimacy in the eyes of Hindus at large, or shake any significant section of Hindus out of their ancestral anchorage. Consequently, having failed to force the large majority of Hindus into its fold, it could leave only some residues which had the potential of poisoning the process of Hindu recovery provided they got reactivised.

The first residue of Islamic imperialism was a decrepit aristocracy (*ashrāf*) — mostly of Arab, or Turkish, or Iranian descent — which had fattened on plunder and never learnt to do a day's honest work, but which continued to fancy itself as the only ruling race. It kept dreaming of staging a come-back. Secondly, there was a fraternity of fanatic mullahs who kept on working frantically for restoration of the Muslim rule. Thirdly, there was a network of schools and seminaries where all teaching and learning was centred round the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet, the twin fountain-head of Islamic imperialism. Fourthly, there were large numbers of native converts who were alienated from their ancestral society and culture, and who were likely to rally round renewed calls for *jihād* against the Hindu *kāfirs*. Lastly, there was a section of Hindus, mostly among the urban middle classes, who had served in the Muslim establishments in one capacity or another, and who had

become enamoured of Muslim language and literature, mores and manners, dress and demeanour, etc.

It is difficult to say how Hindus would have handled these residues of Islamic imperialism, if the latter-day imperialisms had not interfered with Hindu resurgence. All that can be said for sure is that this interference complicated the process of Hindu recovery, and made it far more difficult than it would have been otherwise. For, in the event, this interference endowed the residues of Islamic imperialism with renewed self-confidence on the one hand, and on the other hand forced the Hindus to fall on the defensive once again. Hindus had to struggle very hard and on several fronts at the same time. They succeeded in blunting the edge of Christian imperialism to a large extent. They also succeeded in driving out the British. But they failed vis-a-vis the new Islamic offensive, and had to surrender parts of their ancient homeland to a new wave of Islamic imperialism. And they have yet to see the end of the post-independence period during which Communist imperialism came on top in the form of Nehruvian Secularism, and heaped no end of humiliations on them. For, it is during this period that the word "Hindu" became a dirty word, and Hinduism got equated with Fascism and Nazism.

IV

How and why the latter-day imperialisms succeeded where Islamic imperialism had failed, is a long and complex story which need not be told here. Suffice it to say that what made the real big difference in favour of the new adversaries was the modern Western scholarship which they mobilized for manipulating Hindu minds. In particular, they chose for a concentrated attack the two Hindu institutions which had been the mainstay of Hindu strength down the ages — the Brāhmaṇas who were the teachers of the Hindus and the custodians of Hindu Dharma, and the decentralised Hindu social organization which had served them as their second line of defence whenever the Hindu state broke down under the impact of a foreign invasion. They ridiculed the Brāhmaṇas a practitioners of a puerile priestcraft designed to deceive the people. And they denounced the Hindu social organization as the "Caste System" invented by the "Aryan invaders" in order to keep down the toiling masses,

The Brāhmaṇas had been noticed by the very first foreign invader — Alexander, the Mecedonian adventurer — who succeeded in breaking through India's border defences in the last quarter of the fourth century BC. He was soon tired out and turned back by the stiff resistance offered by the small republics of the Punjab. He wanted to know

as to why the Indians had fought so bravely. He was told by his advisers that the Indian fought so well because they were guided by the Brāhmaṇas. He met some Brāhmaṇas and learnt the substance of their teaching.

Centuries later, the Islamic invaders had also identified the Brāhmaṇas as the source of Hindu strength. They had killed as many Brāhmaṇas as they could, and impoverished the rest by destroying Hindu temples and monastries and schools, and by taking away the lands which provided livelihood to the Brāhmaṇas. Histories written by the medieval Muslim chroniclers are full of venom against the Brāhmaṇas upon whom they hurl many invectives.

But neither the Macedonian adventurer nor the Islamic invaders had spotted the second line of Hindu defence — the decentralised Hindu social organization. That was left to the Christian pirate, Francis Xavier, who landed in Goa in AD 1542, and surveyed the scene in India for several years thereafter. At the end of his labours for converting India into a "land of Christ" with the help of Portuguese arms, he came to the conclusion that Christianity was not likely to make much headway in this country so long as the Hindus had the "Brahmins" and the "Caste System" to teach and protect them.

Xavier's perceptions came to be shared by the latter-day imperialists operating in India — the Christian missions, the British administrators, and the Communist fifth-column. That is why they always made a common cause when attacking the common enemy — Hindu society, Hindu culture, and Hindu nationalism. Apologists of Islam and Secularists of the Nehruvian brand have joined the ranks of these Hindu-baiters, and have been raising similar slogans against the "Brahmins" and the "Caste System". In fact, Nehruvian Secularism embodies all imperialist ideologies that have come to this country in the wake of foreign invasions.

V

Modern Western scholarship which has worked a miracle in manipulating Hindu minds, is a many-splendoured mansion — Cosmology, Archaeology, Historiography, Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, Linguistics, Comparative Mythology, Religious Studies, and the rest. These "modern tools of analysis and evaluation" have been used severally as well as collectively for processing the whole of Hindu heritage, and the results represent the discipline of Indology. Many high-brow professors have been busy all over the Western world in studying Hindu language and literature, religion and philosophy, history and

culture, arts and crafts, society and institutions, mores and manners, dress and food habits, etc. British Utilitarianism, German Idealism, French Positivisin, and Soviet Marxism–Leninism have landed a helping hand in developing the lore in due course. And the fruits of their labour are there for every Hindu to see.

No doubt, modern Western scholarship has some fascinating facets which Hindus will do well to digest. But its essential theme has been, and remains, a variation on the Christian missionary lore. It has believed, and proved to its own satisfaction, that the white man represents the highest point in human evolution, that the white man's world is the hub of the universe, that the white man's civilization is the highest achievement in human history, and that the white man has to shoulder the heavy burden of pulling the rest of the world out of different stages of savagery. It was a pure coincidence that this scholarship surfaced in the same area and more or less at the same time as modern science. But this coincidence enabled this scholarship not only to harness modern science for its imperialist purposes, but also to pretend that it shared the scientific spirit. Marxism–Leninism has been the culmination of this masquerade.

This is not the occasion to go into details of how the latter-day imperialisms mobilized modern Western scholarship for mounting an unprecedented assault on the Hindu intellectual elite. What we are concerned with in the present context is the portrait of Hindus and Hinduism which this scholarship proceeded to paint. The salient features of the protrait that emerged at the end of the operation, were as follows:

1. The oldest and the most sacred scripture of the Hindus, the Rigveda, provides impeccable evidence that a race of blood-thirsty barbarians, who worshipped equally blood-thirsty gods and who styled themselves as Aryans, invaded this country in the second millenium BC, slaughtered or enslaved all those natives who could not escape to the far South or forests and mountain fastnesses in the North, and settled down to live on the fat of this fertile land for all time to come.
2. With a view to perpetuate their stranglehold on this country and its native population, the Aryans created a Caste System in which they themselves constituted the upper castes — Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas — while they reduced the conquered populace to the status of Śūdras and outcaste untouchables.
3. At the same time, the Aryans concocted a priestcraft, presided over by the wily Brahmins and couched in the complex Sanskrit lit-

erature, in order to legitimize and safeguard the Caste System.

4. Whatever veneer of culture the Aryans managed to acquire, was borrowed by them from the native people whom the Sanskrit literature had shamelessly described as Dāsas, Dasyus, Asuras, Rākṣasas, and the rest.
5. That veneer of culture also took no time to come off when, at a subsequent stage, the custodians of Brahminism destroyed the shrines and slaughtered the holy men of Buddhism and Jainism, simply because these rationalist and humanitarian religions questioned the iniquities and cruelties of the Caste System and pleaded for a just and equalitariam social order.
6. But as the people's protest against the primitive superstitions, puerile priestcraft, and the cruel Caste System of Brahminism continued to grow, Brahminism diguised itself in a number of new-sounding cults — Śaivism, Śāktism, Vaiṣṇavism, etc. — and concocted a new series of Sanskrit literature — the Purāṇas and the Dharmaśāstras — in order to hoodwink the people and ensure the continuity of the Caste System, with the crafty Brahmin sitting at its top and cornering unequal privilages as well as rich profits.
7. Thus the essence of Brahminism alias Hinduism has been, and remains, the economically exploitative, socially oppressive, and culturally moribund Caste System, no matter how many heaven-tearing philosophies it stocks in its shop.
8. Hinduism alias Brahminism has continued, and will continue, to suppress, or sidetrack, or subvert by means of its sly syncretism, every single idea, religious or secular, which threatens the Caste System and the domination of the deceitful Brahmins.
9. Speaking scientifically and in a historical perspective, *Hindus proper* are only the upper castes in the present-day "Hindu society", and describing the rest of the people as Hindus is a dirty swindle.
10. Hindus alias the upper caste descendants of the Aryan invaders have joined, and will continue to join, hands with any and every reactionary ideology and force — feudalism, capitalism, colonialism, American imperialism, etc. — in order to safeguared the Caste System and their own strangle-hold on the toiling masses of India.

Some people may accuse me of summarising the conclusions of the Aryan invasion theory in too simplistic terms. I invite them to have a look at the literature being produced by the Marxist historians, the

apologists of Islam, and the Dalit movement. I am not aware if the more sophisticated or high-brow hawkers of the Aryan invasion lore have ever raised any objections to this literature, or to the politics which draws inspiration from it.

The word "Hindu" was thus not only robbed of all the pride and prestige it had acquired over the past several centuries, but also made synonymous with crimes committed by foreign invaders against the indigenous people. At the same time, the word "Hinduism" was made to mean noy only primitive superstition but also an oppressive social system. The "Dravidian South" was taken out of the Hindu fold at one fell sweep, and called upon to rise in revolt against everything Hindu. Hinduism now represented nothing more than "Aryan imperialism" in "Dravidian" eyes. Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism became revolts against Brahminism alias Hinduism. A brand new name — Animism — was invented for tribal religions which had so far counted themselves as members of the Hindu commonwealth of faiths. Finally, Hinduism was compared to the boa constrictor which strangles all that fails to avoid its deadly embrace. The word "Hindu" no more designated the vast majority of the population in this country, and the word "Hinduism" no more stood for a vast spiritual vision and variegated cultural complex. Both words had been "cut to size" and made to mean "what they really mean".

This was the lore which was retailed in many a tome and treatise published by the prestigious publishing houses such as the Oxford University Press. This was the lore which was taught in school and college under an education system designed and controlled by the British establishment and the Christian missions. This was the lore which became the stock-in-trade of the Communist Party of India and the Mulim League. And this was the lore by mouthing which a section of the Indian National Congress started strutting around as "progressive", "radical", "revolutionary", "socialist", and the rest, under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

VI

There was another movement of thought which put the Hindus thoroughly on the defensive. Some Muslim and Marxist scholars had come forward to salvage Islam from its blood-soaked history. Professor Mohammad Habib of the Aligarh Muslim University propounded that Islam was a doctrine not only of religious tolerance but also of social equality and human brotherhood. He explained away the extensive destruction of Hindu temples at the hands of Islamic invaders in terms of

the sultans' lust for loot, and the atrocities committed by Islamic swordsmen in terms of the innate brutality of the Turks. The Communist Party of India had started by seeing the Hindu-Muslim conflict as a petty-bourgeois scramble for jobs, and ended by reducing it to a class conflict in which Hindus were the landlords and the capitalists and Muslims were the peasantry and the proletariat. The Party's mouthpiece inside the Indian National Congress, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, picked up the Party line at every stage and purveyed it to the rank and file of the freedom fighters. Finally, M.N. Roy proclaimed that Islam had come to India in order to complete the social revolution which Buddhism had started but failed to accomplish. The face-lift of Islam had thus received its finishing touches, and any Hindu who referred to Islam as expounded in the Qur'ān, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the commentaries by renowned Imāms, was a reactionary who was trying to block the forward march of history.

Meanwhile, the Indian National Congress itself had started tempering with the history of India under Muslim rule in medieval times. Muslim leaders had branded the Congress as a Hindu organization ever since its birth in 1885. They had denounced the Freedom Struggle against British imperialism as an attempt to impose Hindu Raj on the Muslims. The accusations had gone home, and Congress leaders were trying to prove that their organization was not Hindu but national, and that Muslims were bound to be equal partners in the benefits of Swaraj. They were haranguing the Hindus not to annoy the Muslims by harping upon the crimes committed by Muslim conquerors, and by applauding the Hindu heroes who had stood up against the Islamic onslaught. They had also resurrected as national heroes some decrepit or die-hard Muslim rulers such as Sirajuddaulah, Mir Qasim, Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan, and Bahadur Shah Zafar. But the Muslims had remained far from satisfied with these solicitations and refused to cooperate with the Congress except during the short-lived Khilafat agitation when the Congress had agreed to forget the freedom movement and be used for pan-Islamic purposes.

The Khilafat agitation ended in a fiasco, and the Ulama came out with cries of *jihād* against the Hindu *kāfirs*. Muslim hooligans were on the streets in many places, and reminded the Hindus once again of the real meaning of Islam. The Congress could have used the revealing events for revising its policy of all-out appeasement of the Muslim "minority", and acquiring some insights into the dynamics of Muslim politics. But what it did was just the opposite. It lapped up the Big Lies sold by Sundarlal, a Kayasth Islamophile from Khatauli in Uttar

Pradesh, and conferred upon him the honour of being a Pandit. He had written a book, *Bhārat meṅ Aṅgrezī Raj*, which the British Government had made famous by imposing ban on it. The new Pandit had propounded that 1) the Muslim rule in medieval India was an indigenous as well as illustrious dispensation; 2) the Muslim monarchs were benevolent rulers who, far from doing any harm to the Hindus, did a lot of good to them; 3) the period of Muslim rule was a period of perfect Hindu-Muslim amity; 4) the recent Hindu-Muslim discord was a deliberate creation of the British imperialists in pursuance of their policy of divide-and-rule; and 5) Hindu-Muslim unity could be ensured if distortions introduced by the British in the teaching of medieval history were removed. His "discoveries" were incorporated bodily in an official Congress document, *Report of the Cawnpore Riots Enquiry Committee*, and endorsed by the other Pandit in the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru, in spite of protests from several quarters. Pandit Nehru had already started selling Mahmud of Ghazni as a brilliant soldier, Babur as a man of great culture, and Akbar as the father of Indian nationalism. All those Hindus who refused to swallow this "history" were now getting denounced as Hindu communalists. Now on, Muslims had only to shout "British plot" or "British distortion", and everyone who knew or cited the true facts about Muslim rule had either to fall silent or invite choicest invectives. We have witnessed how Muslim leaders used this device during the dispute over the Rāmjanmabhūmi in Ayodhya.

Mahatma Gandhi was neither a Marxist, nor an Islamophile. He was a great Hindu who was aware of the vast Hindu spiritual vision, the rich Hindu cultural complex, and the glorious Hindu historical traditions. I have not the least doubt that his basic commitment all through his life was to Hinduism, Hindu culture, and Hindu society. But neither his admirers nor his opponents paid any attention to this side of his personality. Both sides remained preoccupied with his policy vis-a-vis the Muslims. Unfortunately, his knowledge of Islam in its different dimensions was less than poor. Muslim aggressiveness towards him personally ever since his early days in South Africa, had carried no meaning for him. He had retreated in the face of every Muslim attack, howsoever wanton. In fact, the more he saw of Islam in action, the deeper became his search for "true Islam". He was a typical Hindu in this respect.

He would have most probably corrected himself in due course, if his mission of Hindu-Muslim unity had remained a policy subject to discussion and dialogue. He became a problem for Hindus only because he made Hindu-Muslim unity into a sacred cult, and refused to listen to

every voice of dissent. He had little patience for those who tried to place before him the facts regarding the doctrine of Islam or its history. On the other hand, he was all smiles for those who subscribed to his cult, for whatever reason or out of whatever motive. His advice to the Hindus was that the "communal problem" would get solved speedily if the Hindus continued to concede Muslim demands, howsoever sinister or silly, till there was a change of heart among the Muslims. It never occurred to him that Hindus also expected some concessions from the other side. That he left entirely to Muslim goodwill which Hindus had to earn in the first instance. In short, he was asking the Hindus to commit suicide.

It was a tragedy indeed that this great Hindu ended by becoming the bridge over which all sorts of Hindu-baiters — Marxists, Mullahs, self-alienated Hindus, and the rest — crossed into the Congress camp, and captured it completely soon after his death. For the Congress Left, Hindus were always in the wrong. The Muslims in the Congress had only to drop a hint, and any Congressman could stand accused as a "Hindu communalist" in the eyes of Pandit Nehru and his henchmen. The only thing that can be said in favour of the Mahatma is that he himself never indulged in or encouraged Hindu-baiting. He never used the expression "Hindu communalist" for those who championed Hindu causes, and opposed his pro-Muslim pursuits.

As a cumulative outcome of these thought currents, Hindus had become thoroughly cornered before the dawn of independence, for bringing which they had made all the sacrifices. Hindus who had all along constituted the nation in this country, had been reduced to a mere community among several others. Hindu nationalism which had fought and defeated several imperialist onslaughts, had become stigmatized as Hindu communalism. Hindu history which had so far inspired Hindu nationalism, had been eclipsed by the history of Muslim conquerors, or made to sound like a distant or distasteful myth. Hindu heroes who had so far provided illustrious examples, had become petty local rebels who had disturbed the peace of the mighty Mughal empire. A new concept of Indian nationalism had been floated and juxtaposed against Hindu nationalism. And Hinduism itself had been made to look like some out-dated clap-trap which should better be sent back to the limbo. Small wonder that the Muslim League, aided and abetted by the Communist Party of India and its fellow-travellers inside the Congress, had a field day and succeeded in drenching the country with the blood of countless innocents before and in the aftermath of Partition.

Even so, the words "Hindu" and "Hinduism" had not yet become dirty words in the ears of the Hindu elite excepting a small minority of Marxists, particularly the disciples of M.N. Roy. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) were still functioning, and were not ashamed of describing themselves as Hindu organizations. The word "Bharatiya" as a substitute for the word "Hindu" had not yet appeared on the scene. Mahatma Gandhi was still introducing himself as a staunch Sanatanist Hindu. He was still paying rich tributes to the Brāhmaṇas and the *Varnāśrama-dharma.* He could still say that he would not like to live in an India which had ceased to be Hindu, and that Hinduism must perish if Brahmanism did not revive. Congress leaders other than Pandit Nehru could still promise that the Somnath Temple would be restored, and take effective steps to fulfil the promise. Cow-protection could still be incorporated into the Constitution as one of its Directive Principles.

VII

The situation for Hindus and Hinduism started worsening after Pandit Nehru rose to supreme power in the Congress and the country at large, after the death of Sardar Patel. One has to read his writings and speeches, and evaluate his policies from the Hindu point of view in order to realize that so far as Hindus and Hinduism are concerned, he was a combined embodiment of all the imperialist ideologies — Islam, Christianity, White Man's Burden, and Communism — that have flooded this country in the wake of foreign invasions or interventions. And by the time he assumed command, he represented a sizable and powerful class of self-alienated Hindus which had started taking shape during Muslim rule, and had multiplied fast under the British dispensation.

Pandit Nehru's first opportunity to strike a blow at Hindus and Hinduism came when Mahatma Gandhi was murdered by a Hindu in January, 1948. He and his brigade inside and outside the Congress sprang into action as never before. Ostensibly they were attacking the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS. But their real target was Hindu society and Hinduism. They were out to make a political use of the national tragedy, and were more than cynical in doing so. Pandit Nehru had never had any use for Mahatma Gandhi except as a shield against what he described as the reactionary forces inside the Congress. Now he saw "the light" going out, and yet showing the path for the future. It is significant that he never quoted the Mahatma except on the question of Hindu-Muslim unity. The Communist Party of India was revising its

line under orders from Moscow, and had already started denouncing the Mahatma as "the cleverest bourgois scoundrel". But on the marrow of the Mahatma's murder, the Party's press was reminding the people that the Mahatma had not died a natural death but had been murdered, and accusing a whole array of persons and organizations of a conspiracy to get him out of the way. Even the Muslim leaders who had all along abused the Mahatma as an enemy of Islam, were shedding crocodile tears, and issuing calls for all "nationalist forces" to get together in order to beat back the march of "Communalist elements". The tragedy had come handy to all those who wanted to put the Hindus against the wall, and blacken Hinduism.

The murder of Mahatma Gandhi has never been understood or presented in a correct and concrete perspective. This is not the occasion to describe in detail the passions that prevailed at that time. Suffice it to say that the Mahatma had fallen a victim to his own follies vis-a-vis the Muslims and Islam, and that Nathuram Godse was no more than an instrument (*nimitta*) of history which had taken a terrible revenge. In any case, people who were not Hindus by birth or inclination, had no business to poke their nose in what was essentially a feud within the Hindu fold. After all, it was the Hindus who had rallied round the Mahatma, and stood by him through thick and thin. They had the right to feel infuriated with the leader who had betrayed the trust they had placed in him, and thrown them to the wolves.

Mahatma Gandhi was assuring the Hindus till the last moment that the country could be divided only over his dead body. But all of a sudden, he threw up his hands and advised the Hindus to follow the leaders who had accepted Partition. He was now showing greater concern for Muslims inside India than for Hindus left to the mercies of the butchers in Pakistan. And he was blackmailing with a fast unto death the only Congress leader, Sardar Patel, who had the courage to stand by the Hindus. There should be no doubt that in the months following Partition, Mahatma Gandhi was the most hated man so far as the Hindu masses were concerned. The price he paid for the Great Betrayal was only a signal that the Hindus were not yet dead.

The murder of the Mahatma is still being used by Hindu-baiters as a stick for beating the Hindus. Only the other day, a life-long Hindu-baiter and a Minister in the Janata Dal Government had a dig at the Saffron flag of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), by saying that it was the same colour which was seen at the time of the Mahatma's murder. Communist and Muslim scribes are never tired of describing the Sangh *Parivāra* as Godse's descendants. The fault in the ultimate analysis lies

with Hindu leaders and organizations for letting this black brood get away with its dirty tricks. Hindu leaders and organizations have been taking fright as soon as the Mahatma's murder is mentioned. They have failed to see the design of anti-Hindu forces, and defeat it once for all by putting the record straight.

The behaviour of Hindu leaders was no different at the time the tragedy took place. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee deserted the Hindu Mahasabha and joined the Congress. The RSS stood totally confused and demoralized. And when Hindu politics re-emerged in 1951, the word "Hindu" was replaced with the word "Bharatiya" in the name of the new Hindu party, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS). The only saving feature was that the Saffron colour had been retained unpolluted in the Party's flag.

I have documented elsewhere how Pandit Nehru hounded out or silenced everyone in the Congress whom he suspected of having some Hindu feeling or sympathy for some Hindu cause, how he saw to it that no quarter was given to the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS, and how he objected to every Hindu symbol in India's public life. The country had been partitioned by the remnants of Islamic imperialism. But he blamed it on "communalism", a word by which he always meant Hinduism. The Communist Party of India had declared a war on the new republic. But in every letter he wrote to the Prime Minister (Chief Ministers) in the Provinces (States), he ordered them to be vigilant about "communal elements", meaning Hindu organizations. The RSS response to this offensive was to flaunt the word "Bharatiya" in the name of every front it floated. The word "Hindu" had become something shameful in the eyes of the foremost Hindu organization. The situation remains the same today.

Pandit Nehru placed the strategic Ministry of Education in the hands of a Marxist-Muslim combine headed by an Islamic fundamentalist, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The Christian missions were given full facilities to expand their network, to educate the Hindu elite into more and more self-alienation, and to convert as many Hindus as they could manage. The missionary apparatus which had panicked when it saw the British Raj drawing to an end, was feeling self-confident again. Professor Mohammad Habib came out with his latest thesis (1954) that the so-called Muslim conquest of India was really a "turn of public opinion", in fact an "urban revolution" in which the "Indian working class" had opted for the *Sharī'at* as against the *Smriti*, and for the leadership provided by the Turks as against the Thakuris. Pandit Nehru endorsed the thesis in a Preface. And he patronized the Communist

Party of India till it became a formidable force with dreams of forming the next government at the Centre. Had not Mao Tse-tung spoiled Pandit Nehru's game, one wonders where he would stopped in his drive against Hindus and Hinduism.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi carried her father's anti-Hindu programme much farther. She was not a Communist like her father. In fact, she had no ideology except that of using everything and everyone for building her personal power. But, for a long time, the Communist Party of India proved to be her most reliable prop. She split the Congress Party and placed well-known Communists in positions of power in the Government at the Centre as well as in the States. So also in some strategic institution in the academic and cultural life of the country. The Muslim-Marxist combine had already captured the Indian History Congress. Now this combine was placed in control of the Indian Council of Historical research, and entrusted with extensive patronage in allied institutions. The combine also came to control the National Council of Educational Research and Training, and to lay down the guidelines for producing school textbooks. The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) was created and financed on a fabulous scale for collecting Communist professors from all over the country. It was not long before an all-out campaign was launched for fighting "communalism", that is, Hinduism, and promoting "Secularism", that is Islam.

By now, the word "Secularism" had become a sacred word which nobody was allowed to question as regards its meaning. The meaning had to be accepted ex-cathedra and as defined by the Marxist-Muslim combine. In the new parlance that emerged, Hinduism was blackened as communalism. Small wonder that the word "Hindu" started becoming a dirty word in the academia as well as the media. The Sikhs had already opted out of the Hindu fold, and their scholars were saying that Sikhism was closer to Islam and Christianity than to Hinduism. The Jains started saying more and more loudly that they were not Hindus. The climax came when the Ramakrishna Mission petitioned the Calcutta High Court, and obtained a decree to the effect that it was not a Hindu organization. The lawyers who argued the Mission's case stated that Sri Ramakrishna could not be a Hindu because he had felt like eating beef. A section of the Arya Samaj was also distancing itself from the Hindu fold. It was saying that the Arya Samajists were Hindus without Hinduism. An article in the Constitution which gave certain concessions to non-Hindu educational institutions was cited by these turn-coats in defence of their treachery. The real reason, however, was

that nobody who thought of himself as somebody was prepared to be known as Hindu any more. The word "Hindu" had become a dirty word.

The situation became much worse after the Janata Party came to power in 1977. By now, the BJS which was a partner in the Janata combine, had been taken over by a known Nehruvian, and those who had objected to the coup had been hounded out. The BJS was mortally afraid of being known as a Hindu organization except privately and in whispers, and was frequently flaunting its Muslim membership in order to prove its Secularist credentials. The RSS itself had invited every known Secularist to use its various platforms for speaking on the sanctified subject. The tragedy of the BJS and the RSS, however, was that no authentic Secularist was prepared to concede their claims. Both of them continued to be suspected as being "Hindu communalist" organizations. The Secularists in the Janata Party, therefore, had only to raise an accusing finger to throw its BJS component on the defensive.

The climax came when the Secularists in the Janata Party asked the BJS to sever its relations with the RSS, and the RSS itself to drop the word "Hindu" from its constitution. The leaders of the BJS group in the Janata Party raised no objection to the dictatorial demand. The RSS also became ready to consider the proposal in its next General Body meeting. One wonders how things would have turned out if the Janata Party regime had not fallen before the critical RSS session could be held. The situation was saved not by the Hindu leaders, but by outer events.

A more shameful slide took place when the BJS reincarnated itself as the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) under the leadership of the known Nehruvian. The ideology of the new party was Gandhian Socialism, whatever that meant. The flag of the BJP was now displaying the green colour of Islamic *jīhād* alongwith the Saffron colour of Hindutva. And the leaders of the BJP could be heard saying more and more frequently that they could no more afford to be known as Hindus (*ab apne āpkō Hindū kahnē sē kām nahīṅ chalēgā*).

That was the situation when there were some signs of Hindu unrest at the doings of Islam in India. Islam was now flush with petro-dollars, and on the offensive once more. The RSS-BJS leaders have been quick to take credit for what they call Hindu awakening. But that is dishonest. They can take credit only for using that unrest in their search for political power. The Hindu unrest itself has arisen in spite of them, and it is yet too early to call it a Hindu awakening. It is difficult to say how

things will take shape. The only thing that can be said for sure is that India has no future till the words "Hindu" and "Hinduism" regain the pride that rightfully belongs to them, and the word "Secularism" is seen for the poison it carries in its Nehruvian version. It is time for Hindu scholarship to see through the manipulations which have made the words "Hindu" and "Hinduism" sound dirty.

SOME RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS

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